

Catholic Adaptation, Irish Conversion: The Postcolonial Graham Greene in Neil Jordan's *The End of the Affair*

Jerod R. Hollyfield

During his four-decade film career, Academy Award-winning writer/director Neil Jordan has transcended conventions and crossed national boundaries to create an oeuvre of critically acclaimed films in a variety of genres. However, despite his reputation as an internationally recognized author and filmmaker whose projects have received financing from both American and European production companies, Jordan has come under fire as the quintessential example of the “schizophrenic identity” of Irish directors who migrate to Hollywood after local success, a filmmaker who, according to Michael Patrick Gillespie, has seen his Irish cinematic sensibilities “continually fighting against ingestion into a larger American ethos.”¹ Regardless of such critiques, Jordan has remained, first and foremost, an Irish artist, injecting his interpretations of the struggle for Irish identity into both his films and fiction directly and metaphorically, traits that position him as a seminal figure for understanding how the all-encompassing reach of

global economic entities such as Hollywood affects filmmakers still contending with the legacies of colonialism.²

As Kevin Rockett writes, whether working in Ireland or Hollywood, Jordan's work seems to “focus on notions of transgression, perceived normality and appearance. Put simply, Jordan allows his characters to explore and challenge borders so that they may be comfortable with their own identity. These borders are most often of a sexual nature, but are necessarily social and cultural.”³ Jordan's Irish films such as *Michael Collins* (1996), his historical dramatization of the Irish revolutionary, and *The Butcher Boy* (1997), his adaptation of novelist Patrick McCabe's account of an Irish adolescent's life during the Cold War, directly address tumultuous political periods in Ireland's history while other works, such as the fairy tale *Ondine* (2009) and the vampire drama *Byzantium* (2012), mine his county's Gothic mythology. Likewise, his most famous film, *The Crying Game* (1992), and his second McCabe adaptation, *Breakfast on Pluto* (2005), employ transgender characters within the framework of Irish Republican Army conflicts to emphasize the liminal identity of his homeland. Even Jordan's “schizophrenic” North American-funded films such as his adaptation of Anne Rice's *Interview with the Vampire* (1994), the psychological horror film *In Dreams* (1999), the gambling drama *The Good Thief* (2002), the vigilante action film *The Brave One* (2007), and the

novels *The Past* (1980), *The Dream of a Beast* (1983), *Sunrise with Sea Monster* (1994), *Shade* (2005), *Mistaken* (2011), *The Drowned Detective* (2016), and *Carnavalesque* (2017).

³ Kevin Rockett, “The Miracle” in *The Cinema of Britain and Ireland*, ed. Brian McFarlane (New York: Wallflower Press, 2005), 209.

¹ Michael Patrick Gillespie, *The Myth of an Irish Cinema: Approaching Irish-Themed Films* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2008), 235-36.

² Jordan is also a prolific and acclaimed fiction writer whose works include the short story collection, *Night in Tunisia* (1976), and the

stalker thriller *Greta* (2019) concern outsider protagonists attempting to solidify their identities in alienating establishment cultures, extensions of his Irish outlook to his Hollywood work.⁴

In a body of films so concerned with formulating a coherent Irish identity, Jordan's adaptation of Graham Greene's 1951 novel *The End of the Affair* (1999) initially appears as an anomaly.

Detailing a four-year long affair between author Maurice Bendrix and Sarah Miles, the wife of a British civil servant, against the backdrop of London in the beginning and aftermath of World War II, the novel never deviates from its English setting, eschewing direct references to Britain's relationship with the colonial holdings, including Ireland, over which the waning Empire was losing its supremacy. Jordan's adaptation of this particular Greene text appears even more peculiar considering that Greene neither shied away from discussing the implications of colonialism in works such as *Journey Without Maps* (1936), *The Heart of the Matter* (1948), and *The Quiet American* (1955) nor remained an isolated English author as he frequently traveled to colonial territories such as Kenya, Malaya, and French Indochina, especially during the early 1950s when he was writing *The End of the Affair*.⁵ As a longtime admirer of Greene, Jordan aimed to faithfully translate the novel to film in contrast to Edward Dmytryk's 1955 Hollywood adaptation starring Deborah Kerr and Peter Cushing.⁶

Yet while Jordan's film appears to maintain an overarching fidelity to

Greene's novel, its status as an adaptation of British literature by an Irish filmmaker that reconstructs its source text's London narrative allows it to interrogate the complex web of relationships among colonial discourse, Irish independence, and the global film industry. Discussing the pervasiveness of fidelity criticism that aspires to comparative analysis of films and source texts in adaptation studies, Anne-Marie Scholz deliberates on the intricacies that such a methodology overlooks:

"Concrete material interests, political and ideological differences, and power relations based upon such variables as gender, nationality, and class all mould the ways texts are transformed into other media and received by audiences in very concrete, materialistic ways."⁷

Consequently, Jordan's choice to maintain general fidelity to the novel situates the adaptation as a deferential yet subversive take on Greene with an embedded Irish positionality that highlights the ambivalent relationship between Greene's cultural role in the Empire and his appeal in Ireland as well as other nations under imperial dominion. Though a vocal critic of empire, Greene still maintained an elite status in British culture that diluted his indictments of colonialism. As Elleke Boehmer writes of Greene and his contemporaries such as George Orwell and Evelyn Waugh: "Bourgeois, Britain-centered, and basically still imperial in their perceptions, the 1930s writers did not come close to committed anti-colonial critique. In theory they sought challenges to the system, but in practice

⁴ *The Good Thief* is a remake of Jean-Pierre Melville's *Bob le flambeur* (1955).

⁵ Michael G. Brennan, *Graham Greene: Fictions, Faith and Authorship* (London: Continuum, 2010), 99.

⁶ Maria Pramaggiore, *Neil Jordan* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2008), 131.

⁷ Anne-Marie Scholz, *From Fidelity to History: Film Adaptations as Cultural Events in the Twentieth Century* (Berghahn, New York, 2013), 3.

they stayed just this side of cultural frontiers. Most of their work, therefore, both illustrates and enacts the difficulty of escaping the confines of British male class privilege and its assumptions of global authority.”⁸ Boehmer’s critique is even more applicable to Greene given what Mark Bosco refers to as the author’s shaping “by the literary heritage of the Victorian and Edwardian age that was a staple of his early reading” and included such luminaries of colonial-adventure writing as Joseph Conrad, H. Rider Haggard, and G. K. Chesterton.⁹ For Jordan, Boehmer’s discussion of the relationship between male class privilege and global authority serves as the central preoccupation of his adaptation. Contrasting Greene’s more overt colonial narratives, *The End of the Affair* seems a text more concerned with portraying a semi-autobiographical account of Greene’s struggles with Catholicism and his romantic triangle with aristocrats Catherine and Harry Walston during a stint in Capri than discussing the twilight years of British imperialism.¹⁰ Through the adaptation process however, Jordan applies what Kevin Rockett, Luke Gibbins, and John Hill see as a hallmark of Irish cinema—not disowning Irish romanticism and mysticism, but prying “open these fissures, exposing the ideological fault-

lines in the landscape.”¹¹ Fully aware of Greene and his contemporaries’ roles within English colonial discourse, Jordan connects the veiled traces of the Empire present in the novel’s imagery and its conflicts between reason and Catholicism to rupture fault lines and magnify them as pointed critiques of British colonialism, responding to the imperial power that continues to assert political and cultural influence over his native Ireland.

Although Jordan’s adaptation of Greene’s novel fosters discussion of the author’s anti-imperialist gestures within the context of colonial discourse, his choice to adapt a novel by Greene and not the other colonial writers Boehmer references also provides him the opportunity to address the role of global capital so vital to the cultural hegemony of Hollywood filmmaking, which, along with the British film industry, has been responsible for the majority of filmic representations of the Irish.¹² Unlike many of his British contemporaries, Greene worked steadily in the film industry both as a critic and a screenwriter.¹³ Writing for numerous publications, including *The Spectator* and *Sight & Sound*, Greene crafted a definition of what he called “the poetic cinema” in his criticism, a type of film that would break middle-class movie audiences away from, as Greene wrote,

⁸ Elleke Boehmer, *Colonial and Postcolonial Literature: Migrant Metaphors*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2005), 152.

⁹ Mark Bosco, “From *The Power and the Glory* to *The Honorary Consul*: The Development of Graham Greene’s Catholic Imagination” *Religion & Literature* 36.2 (Summer 2004), 56.

¹⁰ Robert L. Gale, *Characters and Plots in the Fiction of Graham Greene* (London: McFarland and Company, 2006), 109.

¹¹ Kevin Rockett, Luke Gibbins, and John Hill, *Cinema and Ireland* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1987), xii.

¹² *Ibid.*, 147.

¹³ Though his most notable screenplays were *The Fallen Idol* (1948), *The Third Man* (1949), and *Our Man in Havana* (1959), Greene also wrote the screenplays for less well-received adaptations of his own works *Brighton Rock* (1948), *Loser Takes All* (1956), and *The Comedians* (1967) as well as the screen adaptation of George Bernard Shaw’s *Saint Joan* (1957) for director Otto Preminger.

“the crackling of chocolate paper, the whispers of women with shopping baskets, the secret movements of courting couples.”¹⁴ Echoing Boehmer’s assessment of Greene for his contradictory status as an anti-colonial imperial writer, Greene’s film criticism held a subtle disdain for those outside his role in the Empire and permitted Greene to, as Judith Adamson writes, “cross the border of his own social position and reach those whose lives his class controlled.”¹⁵ As a critic, Greene divided films into two categories: movies—those films that existed solely as escapist entertainment—and cinema, those films that, while simple, held up to the greatest aspirations of art by presenting the reality of life in its purest form.¹⁶ Noting in many of his writings that director Carol Reed was particularly adept at employing the camera to capture the reality of life, Greene began his screenwriting career in earnest with film adaptations of his own novels for the filmmaker: *The Fallen Idol* (1948), for which he earned an Academy Award nomination, and *The Third Man* (1949)—endeavors that won him widespread critical acclaim.¹⁷

Through his views of cinema as a didactic tool to shape the lower classes, Greene’s film career illustrates the claims of Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri concerning the fundamental role the media play in what they deem a contemporary “Empire” governed by global capital: “The communications industries integrate the imaginary and the symbolic within the biopolitical

fabric, not merely putting them at the service of power but actually integrating them into its very functioning.”¹⁸ For Hardt and Negri, the vitality of the new corporate Empire hinges upon the ability of communication tools such as cinema to instruct and indoctrinate citizens about the cultural factors that define the biopolitics governing every facet of their lives. As an author who wrote about empire during the postwar transitional period from a nation state-based colonialism to the Empire of global capital, Greene—and his aesthetic theories—suggest early manifestations of the foundations of Empire that are “formed not on the basis of force itself, but on the basis of the capacity to present force as being in the service of right and peace.”¹⁹

Harnessing Jordan’s strong sense of Irish identity and his artistic experience in both fiction and film media, his adaptation of *The End of the Affair* responds to such past and present iterations of imperial force by portraying cinema’s role in the transitional period of empires as an underlying mechanism of control, directly challenging Greene’s idea of poetic cinema. As Jordan told *Salon* in 1999, “Greene was tremendously jealous of movies, wasn’t he? He hated Hitchcock, didn’t he? And it’s a terrible pity, because if Hitchcock had done some of Greene’s things—of course, he never would have, because so much of the broader world enters into Greene, and Hitchcock was about pure form.”²⁰ Jordan’s film substitutes the stark reality Greene so admired in films

¹⁴ Judith Adamson, *Graham Greene and Cinema* (Norman, OK: Pilgrim Books, 1984), 5.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 4-5.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 5-8.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 52-53.

¹⁸ Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Empire* (Harvard UP, 2000), 33.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 15.

²⁰ Michael Sragow, “‘End of the Affair’ Director Neil Jordan Talks About Sex, Catholicism, and Why ‘God is the Greatest Imaginary Being of All Time,’” *Salon* (9 Dec. 1999). 3 Jan 2019. <<http://www.salon.com/ent/col/srag/1999/12/09/jordan/index.html>>.

with a veiled sense of mysticism and Hitchcockian detail to form while using Hollywood financing to support its director's vision. Funded with British and US investment and distributed by Columbia Pictures, the \$23 million production conforms to the conventions of the Hollywood prestige picture and the British heritage film boasting—in addition to Jordan—Academy Award nominees Ralph Fiennes, Stephen Rea, and Julianne Moore as its leads and respected *Batman* (1989), *12 Monkeys* (1995), and *Harry Potter* (2002, 2005) cinematographer Roger Pratt. Working within Hollywood, Jordan creates a subtle, simultaneous critique of colonial discourse and global capital to forge a depiction of Irish identity within a narrative and economic system that largely ignores its presence. In adapting Greene's novel to film, Jordan cultivates a through line of imperial force from the British Empire to contemporary Hollywood, greatly altering the last two books of the novel by reframing the narrative's preoccupations with the Catholic faith and the state of the British Empire after World War II through the lens of an Irish perspective that not only criticizes Britain's suppression of Irish-Catholicism but also refracts literary and cinematic stereotypes of the Irish in his construction of postwar London.

World War II and Greene's crumbling empire

Narrated by its protagonist, Maurice Bendrix, Greene's *The End of the Affair* unspools its eponymous extramarital liaison between Bendrix and Sarah Miles against the London Blitz and its aftermath. Yet unlike other novels set during the time period such as Mary Renault's *The Charioteer* (1953) and Ian McEwan's *Atonement* (2001), *The End of the Affair* focuses not on the soldiers

directly affected by the war through battlefield confrontations, but on characters whose interaction with the period is peripheral as a result of their socioeconomic position. Injuring his leg in an unnamed accident, Bendrix receives exemption from serving in the military during the conflict, making a living as a writer who probes the society of English bureaucrats. Conducting research for a novel dealing with the lives of civil servants' wives, Bendrix meets Sarah and her husband Henry, a high-ranking, bland official in Widow's Pensions and the Ministry of Home Security. From the beginning of the novel, Greene establishes his central characters as members of the professional class to which he also belonged, who, despite their often anti-colonial leanings, earned their livelihood as government officials or, in the case of Bendrix, were direct beneficiaries of its authority. As a result of their social status, the violence of World War II has a subdued effect on Greene's characters, functioning instead as a nuisance mentioned only when it passively encroaches on the outer boundaries of their personal lives. When passing by Eastbourne Terrace, where he and Sarah began the affair during the war six years earlier, Bendrix meditates on how the bombings changed the appearance of the block:

Half of it was gone—the half where the hotels used to stand had been blasted to bits, and the place where we made love that night was a patch of air. It had been the Bristol; there was a potted fern in the hall and we were shown the best room by a manageress with blue hair; a real Edwardian room with a great gilt double bed and red velvet curtains and a full-length mirror. (People who came to Arbuckle Avenue never

required twin beds.) I remember the trivial details very well.²¹

Bendrix begins describing the block after its destruction in an air raid, but his thoughts quickly shift to a personalized account of how the now-destroyed hotel appeared to him in the moments before the consummation of his affair with Sarah in the Edwardian room with its direct connection to the sovereign. Bendrix admits his details are trivial, yet behind his description lies an idealization of the past not uncommon for those of his social position. Now facing the postwar world in a British society losing the Empire that made it an international force, Bendrix finds his social status and inner circle in flux. Though he masked the effects of the war during his affair with Sarah, its end result has forced him into a state of denial that looks upon the past in greater detail than the precarious present.

As Bendrix's affair and the war rage on, he adopts a sense of collusion with the conflict, perceiving it not as a violent struggle that will change the scope of the world, but as an excuse that works in concert with him to prolong his sexual liaisons with Sarah. Greene writes:

War had helped us in a good many ways, and that was how I had almost come to regard war as a rather disreputable and unreliable accomplice in my affair.

(Deliberately I would put the caustic soda of that word 'affair', with its suggestion of a beginning and an end, upon my tongue.) I suppose Germany by this time had invaded the Low Countries: the spring like a corpse was sweet with the smell of

doom, but nothing mattered to me but two practical facts - Henry had been shifted to Home Security and worked late, my landlady had removed to the basement for fear of air-raids, and no longer lurked upon the floor above watching over the banisters for undesirable visitors. My own life had altered not at all, because of my lameness (I have one leg a little shorter than the other, the result of an accident in childhood); only when the air-raids started did I feel it necessary to become a warden. It was for the time being as though I had signed out of the war.²²

Bendrix does acknowledge the war's death and destruction. Nevertheless, he emphasizes how its impact relates to his relationship with Sarah, not how his relationship with Sarah relates to the conflict. Writing about the couple's insularity, Craig E. Mattson and Virginia LaGrand discuss how the relationship typifies a "modern eroticism" with "a simplistic and narrow focus that abstracts its participants from the world. When sexual love draws down its enjoyers into a singular focus on themselves, Greene seems to be suggesting, it creates a realm increasingly sealed off from awe, desire, and, indeed, human society."²³ As long as the war continues, it permits Bendrix to enjoy his illicit romance made possible by the class position of the couple. With the other characters' attentions devoted to the war in either Henry's capacity as a government official or his landlady's role as a subject fearing for her life, Bendrix exploits its consequences, his status made possible

²¹ Graham Greene, *The End of the Affair*, 1951 (New York: Penguin, 1999), 44.

²² *Ibid.*, 57.

²³ Craig E. Mattson & Virginia LaGrand, "Eros at the World's End: Apocalyptic Attention in The Love Stories of Graham Greene and P. D. James," *Renascence* 64.3 (Spring 2012), 280.

by his (and his lover's) role in the machinery of the Empire.

When the horrors of war finally do intrude on Bendrix and Sarah's relationship, the couple remains enveloped in their own desire, which makes the subsequent dissolution of the affair after a Blitz attack much more harrowing for Bendrix than the war's violence. As Bendrix and Sarah make love to the sound of dropping bombs, Bendrix says: "No, the V1's didn't affect us until the act of love was over. I had spent everything I had, and was lying on my back with my head on her stomach and her taste—as thin and elusive as water—in my mouth, when one of the robots crashed down on to the Common and we could hear the glass breaking further down the south side."²⁴ Even with the presence of death mere feet from his bedroom, Bendrix remains fixated on his personal life, not letting the violence affect him until it blasts through his apartment complex: "I never heard the explosion, and I woke after five seconds or five minutes in a changed world."²⁵ Bendrix admits that the world has changed after his near-death experience, but the alterations to his life come not from the war's potential to turn him into a casualty, but from Sarah's sudden decision to end their affair directly after the attack. Rebuffing Bendrix's pleas for her to stay until after the All Clear, Sarah exits, curtailing future encounters with Bendrix by using her husband's fabricated presence at home as an excuse. Alone in his room and nursing his physical wounds, Bendrix ruminates on the destruction of his relationship: "Henry. Henry. Henry—that name tolled through our relationship, damping every

mood of happiness or fun or exhilaration with its reminder that love dies, affection and habit win the day. 'You needn't be so scared,' she said, 'love doesn't end.'"²⁶ For Bendrix, the travesties of the war continue to assume a minuscule position in his life, completely dwarfed by his affection for Sarah. Yet the effects of the war and his affair make lasting impressions on Bendrix's psyche. While both eventually end, their repercussions for Bendrix define the uncertainty of his future, leaving him adrift and damaged by the constraints of the war that force him into a life of aimlessness.

Although Bendrix and Sarah elevate their relationship above the changing landscape of Britain during the war, Greene justifies their self-involvement through his choice of constructing the narrative from Bendrix's self-reflexive point of view, allowing Bendrix the opportunity to explain the extent to which his love for Sarah consumes him. As he recalls the desolation and heartbreak the end of the relationship caused, Bendrix writes: "We remember the details of our story, we do not invent them. War didn't trouble those deep sea-caves, but now there was something of infinitely greater importance to me than war, than my novel—the end of love."²⁷ Acting not only as a narrator but also as the author of the story his audience reads, Bendrix realizes that his wanton disregard for the horrors of war could appear callous and harm the believability of his story. Therefore, he tries to blunt any criticism by portraying the end of his love as the dwindling of a desire imperative for humanity that eclipses work, art, and war. Greene conceives his protagonist not as a selfish

²⁴ Greene, 70.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 71.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 73.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 35.

man immune to other's suffering, but as a romantic trying to prolong the existence of a love dying in the war-ravaged imperial center where it came to fruition.

Imperial point of view and narrative slant in Jordan's London

In adapting *The End of the Affair* to the screen, Jordan utilizes Greene's choice to write from Bendrix's point of view as his primary tool to engage the novel's colonial politics, subtly portraying the film's lead characters as sequestered from the rest of the world by the physical and economic power of London's urban milieu. Though the film preserves Bendrix's central role in the narrative, it complicates his perspective by embracing the limitations of the film medium's point-of-view capabilities to dilute Bendrix's agency. Since film narration must navigate the camera's perspective, even those stories told in first person are forced to communicate through an amalgamation of visuals and voiceover. In the words of adaptation theorist Brian McFarlane, cinema merely offers a "precarious analogy" to the subjective perspective of a novel's first-person narration: "The device of oral narration, or voice-over, may serve important narrative functions in film (e.g., reinforcing a sense of past tense) but, by virtual necessity, it cannot be more than intermittent as distinct from the continuing nature of the novelistic first-person narration."²⁸ By seizing onto cinema's limited potential for subjectivity, Jordan creates a dual narrative structure in his adaptation: one belonging to Bendrix (Ralph Fiennes) detailing the events of his affair

with Sarah (Julianne Moore) and the other belonging to Jordan's camera, limited to recording the events in front of its lens. Jordan's narrative strategy takes full advantage of what Seymour Chatman defines as the "slant" of a narrative, a term that goes beyond point-of-view and grapples with "the psychological, sociological, and ideological ramifications of the narrator's attitudes, which may range from neutral to highly charged."²⁹ Given Jordan's anti-colonial preoccupations, he adopts a slant through his shot design that generates an additional voice in the narrative, presenting an alternative to Bendrix's point of view that challenges his protagonist's imperial complicity and is absent from the novel.

Jordan primarily implements the camera's slant to critique Bendrix's and Sarah's roles in the British Empire during scenes of their sexual encounters. When the couple consummates their relationship in the Miles home, Jordan shoots their physical interactions through straight-on angles with a camera that dollies throughout the room. Bendrix and Sarah remain central to the frame, but Jordan also moves the camera to position his characters in the center of the room's lavish decor, including the blue velvet couch on which the couple lies, a liquor cabinet stocked with a variety of exposed bottles, and a side table displaying a stack of magazines featuring British royals. As the couple inches closer to climax, Jordan dollies forward into a close-up, shifting the focus of his camera away from the room's decor and onto the lovers' faces when they reach orgasm.

²⁸ Brian McFarlane, *Novel to Film: An Introduction to Film Adaptation* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 16.

²⁹ Seymour Chatman, *Coming to Terms: The Rhetoric of Narrative in Fiction and Film* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1990), 143.

Through his use of slant via the dolly shot, Jordan frames his characters contained by commodities—narrative information elided in the novel. The couple is able to forget the world around them and concentrate solely on each other. Nonetheless, Jordan depicts their bliss as a willful ignorance of a social stature gleaned from colonial exploitation, a correlation he buttresses with the scene's long takes that shift the camera's gaze from the room's decor to the couple's mid-coitus facial expressions.

Consequently, Jordan's use of slant to critique Bendrix and Sarah's colonial abetment becomes even more charged as they argue about fidelity during their second sexual encounter in the film. Shooting the scene with close-ups of the characters and shot-reverse-shot, Jordan homes in on Bendrix and Sarah in bed as they debate Henry's influence on their love. During the couple's argument, Jordan punctuates their sentences with the sounds of sirens and distant bomb explosions occurring outside the confines of their room. As the argument progresses, culminating in a sudden surge of love making, the sounds of the blasts escalate, and the room begins to shake violently with white plaster falling from the ceiling. The aural and spatial disturbances from the air raid notwithstanding, the couple remains engrossed in each other, ignoring the events outside their room. Through the juxtaposition of the violence occurring in the city and the couple's sexual activity, Jordan underscores his characters' disregard for the events affecting the lives of those around him. With England's population embroiled in the horrors of war, Bendrix and Sarah reveal ambivalence toward the conflict, their class position superseding any semblance of civic

mindedness. However, while Bendrix's point of view in the novel attempts to justify his fixation on Sarah in a time of war, Jordan's film provides its protagonist no such opportunity, presenting him simply as a man insulated by his privilege despite the violence of the war around him.

In perhaps his greatest deviation from Bendrix's narrative authority in the novel, Jordan uses the camera's slant to directly convey Sarah's perspective, completely stripping Bendrix of control over his own story. Though Greene constructs Book III of the novel as a series of excerpts from Sarah's diary that Bendrix hires private investigator Parkis to commandeer, Bendrix remains in narrative control, bookending Sarah's journal entries with his own editorial asides. Jordan's film, however, endows Sarah with her own sense of narrative agency, integrating Sarah's perspective on the couple's lovemaking by recycling the same blocking from scenes Bendrix narrated. Stylistically, Jordan recreates the previous scenes from opposite angles as Sarah now narrates her own perceptions: reversing shot reverse shot to focus on Sarah's reactions rather than Bendrix's dialogue and placing Sarah instead of Bendrix in the foreground of the frames. As a result, the camera's slant, removed from the action of the narrative, creates two versions of events with two distinct perspectives, a stylistic device similar to that used in Akira Kurosawa's film *Rashomon* (1950).

In her discussion of the film's illustration of Bendrix's "masculine jealousy," Candida Yates calls into question the effect of Jordan's shift in narrative agency to Sarah:

The idealization of Sarah reduces her emotional significance within the narrative in relation to Bendrix's emotional drama. A section of the

narrative is told from her point of view and is narrated by her in the form of a voice-over. However, what we see is his vision of what she is saying and so her story is mediated by his interpretation of events. In giving his interpretation of her story, Bendrix also steals her narrative, something that reinforces Bendrix's theft of the diary within the story itself. This scenario illustrates recent feminist debates in film studies about whether recent representations of a 'new' more feeling-ful masculinity in popular culture signify a meaningful cultural shift, or whether these popular images of emotional masculinities represent something more superficial.³⁰

Although Yates's critique lends itself well to a feminist reading, it overlooks other political motivations for Bendrix's theft of Sarah's narrative and the film's visual repetitions of scenes in Sarah's retelling. The adaptation embraces a viewpoint that Greene's novel denies Sarah, but it also serves as a way for Jordan to metaphorically integrate an Irish perspective directly into a work that ignores its existence. In its construction, empire relies on masculine strength to assert its control over colonized territories, othering the colonized by equating them with the feminine counterpart to the dominant male, an ideology at the core of the "muscular Christianity" that shaped the late British Empire in which the male body became the central metaphor for accepted political and religious ideologies—especially important to a Catholic writer such as Greene.³¹ As the female protagonist of the film, Sarah

also acts as a female colonized by her marriage to Henry, forced into an Empire-sanctioned contract with a civil servant on whose finances she remains dependent. In cultivating this Irish perspective, Jordan employs the gender of Greene's characters for the purposes of colonial allegory. Through this revisionary use of slant, Jordan presents the same events that unfold in Greene's novel with an approach that calls attention to Bendrix's narrative monopoly, wedging Sarah's previously silenced voice into the adaptation to expose fissures in the source text's colonial underpinnings.

In this gendering of England and Ireland, Jordan increases the violence of the raid that injured Bendrix and ultimately marks the end of his affair with Sarah. Rather than execute the Blitz as an attack that merely lacerates and bruises Bendrix, Jordan orchestrates the explosion as a torrent of action that the character barely survives. When the bomb hits the apartment complex, it explodes in a ball of fire, violently knocking Bendrix two floors below his apartment amid a shower of debris. Instead of thinking Bendrix is dead from the bombing as she does in the novel, Sarah rushes to his body to find him not breathing and bleeding profusely, making his revival appear much more miraculous than in Greene's narrative. Through the amplified violence, Jordan directly attacks the masculine connotations of the British Empire as he increases the prominence of his female character. In Jordan's film, Bendrix is unable to shield himself from the war that will eventually destroy Britain's prowess, nearly dying as a result of one of its attacks. To survive, he

³⁰ Candida Yates, "Masculine Jealousy and the Struggle for Possession in *The End of the Affair*," *Journal for Cultural Research* 10.3 (July 2006), 208.

³¹ Donald Hall, "Introduction," *Muscular Christianity: Embodying the Victorian Age* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 8.

must rely on Sarah's mystical presence to resuscitate him, a role Jordan grants to his female character that Greene previously denied her.

With the narrative firmly in his control through his use of slant to provide alternative perspectives on the Empire presented in the novel, Jordan also accents Greene's uninterrogated references to Britain's imperial scope. British colonial endeavors remain on the periphery throughout the novel, but Greene often makes veiled references to Britain's status as an imperial power as the narrative progresses. When visiting Henry and Sarah's home for the first time two years after their affair ends, Bendrix surveys Henry's study, noting its decor: "I doubted whether the set of Gibbon had once been opened, and the set of Scott was only there because it had—probably—belonged to his father, like the bronze copy of the Discus Thrower. And yet he was happier in his unused room simply because it was his: his possession. I thought with bitterness and envy: if one possesses a thing securely, one need never use it."³² Bendrix's narration reveals that all the items he mentions carry connotations of the British Empire's strength. Sir Walter Scott's Romantic works, written during the formative years of the Empire's expansion, note British pride in cultural heritage (albeit appropriated from Scotland). Through the inclusion of the Discus Thrower, Greene links England to the Greek and Roman Empires of the classical age, a comparison he ambivalently ties to Britain's current postwar status through his inclusion of Edward Gibbon's *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*

³² Greene, 13.

³³ Supriya Chaudhuri, Josephine McDonagh, Brian H. Murray, and Rajeswari Sunder Rajan, eds. Introduction, *Commodities and Culture in*

on the shelf. Accumulating his possessions through his role as an agent of Empire, Henry acts as a microcosm of British imperialism, treasuring the legacy of his nation and laying claim to the cultural capital of the colonies—not for their utility or even his interest in them as Bendrix suggests—but for the pleasure of possession that his social status permits.

Otherwise maintaining Greene's keen attention to detail in its mise-en-scène, the film alters the decor of Henry's home, replacing images of the British Empire with items reaped from colonized nations. As Bendrix visits the space for the first time in the film, he passes by an array of Eastern commodities that accents every piece of furniture in the room. Throughout the film, Jordan frames his shots so that the images always remain in the background as the narrative unfolds. Before every sexual encounter that occurs in the house, Bendrix and Sarah pass a display of imported vases in the foyer that become a passive and unacknowledged motif. Through his engagement with Eastern commodity, Jordan heightens the associations between Henry's desire for possession and his role in Empire. Given that colonial expansion coincided with the rise of commodity culture and, from the Victorian era to decolonization, inexorably linked the two, Jordan's set design conveys a calculated critique of colonialism.³³ As the British Empire enters its waning days, Henry surrounds himself not with symbols of the Empire's strength, but with the fruits of its endeavors, accumulating as much as possible before the demise of the imperial power as he comes to the

the Colonial World (London: Routledge, 2018), 3.

realization that he holds no authority over his wife.

Despite Jordan's critiques of Greene's depiction of the British Empire, he maintains a sense of fidelity to the novel's original text, emphasizing Greene's few apparent criticisms of colonialism. When Bendrix contemplates his first encounter with Sarah, Greene writes: "We saw each other for the first time, drinking bad South African sherry because of the war in Spain."³⁴ Though Jordan limits Bendrix's narration in the film, Bendrix delivers the line in its entirety in voiceover as he writes his account of the story on a typewriter. By preserving Greene's sentiment, Jordan strengthens his critique of colonial possession in the film, portraying his characters as servants of Empire who only consume products from colonial territories when their European counterparts are not available. Likewise, Jordan faithfully records the scene in the novel when Bendrix asks Parkis about the name of his son. Greene writes:

'He's called Lance, isn't he?'
'After Sir Lancelot, sir. Of the Round Table.'
'I'm surprised. That was a rather unpleasant episode, surely.'
'He found the Holy Grail,' Mr. Parkis said.
'That was Galahad. Lancelot was found in bed with Guinevere.'...
'I hadn't heard.'³⁵

Through retaining the exchange, Jordan repositions Greene's ironic barb meant simultaneously to attack lower-class

knowledge of British legend and to compare Bendrix and Lancelot's affairs as a critique of colonial discourse. Within the context of Jordan's adaptation, the lines imply Bendrix and Parkis' inability to understand the Empire to which they belong. While Parkis (Ian Hart) displays ignorance concerning the mythic foundations of the Empire (embodying what S. K. Sharma refers to as an example of the "Dickensian grotesque"), Bendrix touts a knowledge of Arthurian legend that, when coupled with Jordan's portrayal of him as a man insulated by the spoils of imperialism, situates him as a character living in fantasy and unable to deal with the colonial power crumbling around him.³⁶

Catholic Mysticism, Irish Nationalism, and Cultural Imperialism

As one of the most prominent Catholic writers of the 20th century, Greene attempted to come to terms with the brutality of World War II and the nation's challenged spiritual life in the waning Empire by, according to Darren J. N. Middleton, constructing a version of a mystical God with a "seemingly ironic nature and activity that poses problems" in line with early biblical accounts that "seldom shy away from thinking of God as terror."³⁷ Converting to Catholicism during his relationship with Vivien Dayrell-Browning, Greene took his faith seriously, studying scripture and attending mass on a regular basis.³⁸ From the 1938

³⁴ Greene, 25.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 77.

³⁶ S. K. Sharma, *Graham Greene: The Search for Belief* (New Delhi: Harman Publishing House, 1990), 125.

³⁷ Darren J. N. Middleton, *Theology after Reading: Christian Imagination and the Power*

of Fiction (Baylor, TX: Baylor University Press, 2008), 44-45.

³⁸ Mark Bosco, *Graham Greene's Catholic Imagination* (London: Oxford University Press, 2005), 33.

publication of *Brighton Rock* to the release of *The End of the Affair*, Greene's novels spearheaded a resurgence in the tradition of the "Catholic novel," a movement that began as a response to the secular Enlightenment thought of the 18th century.³⁹ As a genre, it also has its genesis in English Catholics' struggles to defend their adherence to a foreign faith and justify its validity, making it integral to understanding a time in which anticolonial movements were burgeoning in the British colonies.⁴⁰ Working with many characteristics of Enlightenment-era Catholic novels, Greene reinterpreted the form, achieving a Catholic perspective that, as Bosco writes, "is never offered as a comforting way out of the discomfiting realities of modernity."⁴¹ Taking into consideration this breakdown of Britain's dominion, *The End of the Affair* serves as the endnote to Greene's career as an author of overtly Catholic novels as well as his quest to understand the changing landscape of empire through an explicit religious lens.

Given what Mary R. Reichardt perceives as Catholic literature's "adaptability to many time periods and cultures, genres and styles," Greene's status as both a writer of Catholic novels and an enduring cinematic voice makes *The End of the Affair* a potent text for adaptation, especially for a secular Irish filmmaker such as Jordan.⁴² As an avowed atheist who told Michael Sragow

in an interview promoting the film that "God is the greatest imaginary being of all time," Jordan exhibits a particular fascination with Catholicism in his adaptation.⁴³ Despite the increased prominence of Catholicism in the film, Jordan's discussions of the faith appear far more concerned with its role in Irish culture than its doctrinal veracity, a connection overlooked by many critics such as David Sterritt who, even in a highly complementary review, found the material unexpected territory for the "decidedly secular" Jordan.⁴⁴ In contrast to such critical confusion, the Irish constructed a nationalist narrative woven around the Catholic Church in which to be Irish was to be Catholic regardless of actual religious affiliation.⁴⁵ This identification was so strong that Ireland, though never a theocratic state, came the closest of all Western nations during the 20th century to embracing the model due to Britain's continuing and pervasive influence over it.⁴⁶ As Jocelyn Evans and Jonathan Tonge write:

Nationhood and nationalism may outgrow its religious associations, and the Catholic Church in Ireland has never been as unpopular as at present, but religious affiliations may remain. Catholic identification, as distinct from adherence to the tenets of faith, may be important as a civil or even "secular" religion, particularly so in Northern Ireland, where it remains a communal badge and

³⁹ Ibid., 7.

⁴⁰ Marian E. Crowe, *Aiming at Heaven, Getting the Earth: The English Catholic Novel Today* (New York: Lexington Books, 2007), 40.

⁴¹ Bosco, *Graham Greene's Catholic Imagination*, 6.

⁴² Mary R. Reichardt, *Between Human and Divine: The Catholic Vision in Contemporary Literature* (Washington: The Catholic University of America Press, 2011), 2.

⁴³ Sragow.

⁴⁴ David Sterritt, "Review of *The End of the Affair*" *Film Comment* 36.1 (Jan/Feb 2000), 74.

⁴⁵ Sean Kay, *Celtic Revival?: The Rise, Fall, and Renewal of Global Ireland* (New York: Rowan and Littlefield, 2011), 107-08.

⁴⁶ Bryan Fanning, "A Catholic Vision of Ireland" *Are the Irish Different?*, Ed. Tom Inglis, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2014), 51.

where anti-Catholic sentiment was apparent over many decades.⁴⁷ Conquered by a British Empire espousing Protestant doctrine, Irish-Catholic subjects suffered a dual subaltern status within Britain's imperial endeavors, persecuted for their nationality as well as religious beliefs beginning as early as the 1366 Statutes of Kilkenny, which, according to Suzanne J. Crawford O'Brien, "suppressed Irish language, laws, customs and even modes of dress and haircuts and was chiefly directed at those Norman settlers who had 'gone Native,' intermarrying and becoming part of Irish society."⁴⁸ Thus, Irish-Catholics were subjected to increased ill-treatment under English rule, stripped of their land, plagued by regulations when serving in the army, and seen as inferior to their Protestant counterparts.⁴⁹ As the subjugation of Irish-Catholics at the hands of the British continued, pro-Catholic sentiments merged with national identity to create a strong sense of Irish nationalism that led to violent political struggles such as the 1916 Easter Rising and later actions by groups such as the Irish Republican Army.⁵⁰ Largely because of these irrevocable links between Irish nationalism and the

Church, the tradition of the Catholic novel in which Greene wrote never took root in Ireland, its examination of transcendent experience inhibited by the political realities of censorship boards and outcry from traditionalists.⁵¹

The case of the Irish illustrates Boyle's call to examine the relationship between Catholicism and the postcolonial world within the context of "the locations in which different postcolonial strategies germinate and take shape and the capacity of these strategies to then access and mold the geopolitical agendas pursued by different nations."⁵² This postcolonial positioning of Catholicism is especially important to a filmmaker such as Jordan who rose to fame at a time ripe for deconstruction and reassessment of Irish Catholicism and nationalism in literature and cinema.⁵³ As Seamus Deane writes: "The nationalist narrative, which told the story of seven hundred years of English misrule (finally brought to a conclusion by the heroic rebellion of 1916 and the violence of the following six years, and now culminating with the unfinished business in the North), has lost much of its appeal and legitimacy save for those who are committed to the

⁴⁷ Jocelyn Evans and Jonathan Tonge, "Catholic, Irish and Nationalist: Evaluating the Importance of Ethno-National and Ethno-Religious Variables in Determining Nationalist Political Allegiance in Northern Ireland" *Nations and Nationalism* 19.3 (Spring 2013), 359.

⁴⁸ Suzanne J. Crawford O'Brien, "Well, Water, Rock: Holy Wells, Mass Rocks, and Reconciling Identity in the Republic of Ireland," *Material Religion* 4.3 (Fall 2008), 337.

⁴⁹ Kevin Whelan, *The Tree of Liberty: Radicalism, Catholicism and the Construction of Irish Identity 1760-1830* (South Bend, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1996), 6-10.

⁵⁰ Richard English, *Armed Struggle: The History of the IRA* (London: Oxford University Press, 2003), 232-235.

⁵¹ Eamon Maher, "The Half-Life and Death of the Irish Catholic Novel," *The Irish Times* (23 Dec. 2017), <https://www.irishtimes.com/culture/books/the-half-life-and-death-of-the-irish-catholic-novel-1.3318977>.

⁵² Mark Boyle, "Beyond the 'Sigh of the Oppressed Creature': A Critical Geographical Enquiry into Christianity's Contributions to the Making of a Peaceable West," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 10.3 (2010), 683.

⁵³ Pramaggiore, 3.

IRA and armed struggle.”⁵⁴ Coming of age during this forging of Irish identity, Jordan, in the words of Maria Pramaggiore, demonstrates in his work a “focus on the destabilizing effects of these profound cultural shifts at the level of individual character.”⁵⁵ In his version of *End of the Affair*, Sarah becomes the conduit through which Jordan channels these Irish cultural shifts, adapting the character Michael G. Brennan calls the most intriguing female in Greene’s fiction as a result of her love quadrangle that involves not only two men awash in imperial masculinity but also the Almighty that the Empire often invoked to justify its colonial enterprises.⁵⁶ Echoing Deane’s criticism of the Irish nationalist narrative, Jordan appropriates the Catholicism of Greene’s novel to address both Irish-Catholic struggle during British rule and Irish nationalism through Sarah’s personal struggles with Catholicism as well as Bendrix and Henry’s manipulation of her faith.

Although maintaining what Pramaggiore views as a “painstaking faithfulness” to Greene’s novel, Jordan’s adaptation sharply deviates from the source text’s treatment of Catholicism, evoking the conflicts between the religious and secular worlds in a much more blatant manner.⁵⁷ The first half of Greene’s novel deals solely with the particulars of Bendrix and Sarah’s affair until the pivotal moment when Bendrix recovers from the explosion that blasts through his apartment complex. Viewing Bendrix’s survival as a miracle that calls her atheism into question, Sarah relates the words she silently

prayed after thinking her lover dead: “Let him be alive, and I *will* believe. Give him a chance. Let him have his happiness. Do this and I’ll believe. But that wasn’t enough. It doesn’t hurt to believe. So I said, I love him and I’ll do anything if you’ll make him alive. I said very slowly, I’ll give him up forever, only let him be alive with a chance.”⁵⁸ Suddenly thrown out of the atheistic worldview she shares with Bendrix, Sarah enters a conflict of the unknown, vowing to keep the promise she made to God after her “prayers” are answered. In the wake of Bendrix’s survival, Greene represents Sarah’s religious struggle to answer the question she poses to herself—“Why did this promise stay?”—through the integration of two characters she visits: Richard Smythe, a rationalist street speaker and Father Crompton, a Catholic priest.⁵⁹ Sarah seeks to answer her question, but she dies of a lung disease before she gains clarity, leaving Bendrix and Henry ignorant of her true beliefs and forced to decide whether they should give her a Catholic burial or simply cremate her body, which they ultimately do. Only after Bendrix has dinner with Sarah’s mother—Mrs. Bertram—does Greene reveal that Sarah was baptized Catholic and that her mother “always had a wish that it would ‘take.’ Like vaccination.”⁶⁰ By remaining ambiguous about Sarah’s faith after Bendrix’s survival, Greene creates a manifestation of the conflicts facing religious believers fueled by postwar British anxieties, especially during a period in which conversion to Catholicism in Britain surpassed the spike after World War I and would not

⁵⁴ Seamus Deane, Introduction, *Nationalism, Colonialism, and Literature*, ed. Seamus Deane (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1990), 6.

⁵⁵ Pramaggiore, 7.

⁵⁶ Brennan, 93.

⁵⁷ Pramaggiore, 131.

⁵⁸ Greene, 95.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 106.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 164.

peak until 1960.⁶¹ Though Sarah doubts her faith throughout the final days of her life, in due course she decides not only to embrace religion but also to sacrifice her love for Bendrix to honor its power—what Brennan calls her “physical self-annihilation”—making her an ironic Catholic martyr to initiate the eventual conversions of her lover and husband.⁶²

Directly contradicting Jordan’s secular perspective that its reviews dwelled upon, the film eliminates Sarah’s crisis of faith from the adaptation, streamlining the narrative by renaming the priest character Father Smythe and completely excising the novel’s Smythe. In addition, Jordan removes Mrs. Bertram from the film, opting for Sarah to relay her Catholic baptism to Bendrix long before her death. As a result, Jordan depicts Sarah not as a woman torn between rationalism and religion, but as a lapsed Catholic whose faith is reignited by Bendrix’s survival after the bomb blast. Jordan’s expunging of Sarah’s conflict between faith and rationality appears peculiar, but it endows the film with the ability to sidestep what Bosco calls Greene’s “religious interiority” that has no correlative in the film medium.⁶³ Instead, Jordan immerses the narrative in Irish mysticism to construct Sarah as a “Gothic double” indicative of Ireland’s role within Greene’s England.⁶⁴ With Sarah’s faith resolutely established early in the film amid Jordan’s motif of a gloomy London mired in pervasive rain, Bendrix and Henry’s final decision to cremate her ceases to stem from their ignorance of her wishes.⁶⁵ Instead, her

cremation becomes a vigorous attempt by her partners to erase her rekindled Catholicism, permitting them to maintain a memory of Sarah that acts in concert with their atheism. Whereas the Bendrix of the novel foregoes suppressing Sarah’s diary as his own conversion commences, the film’s Bendrix becomes an active force of masculine dominance, a facet of the plot Jordan further highlights by creating the aforementioned double vision of Sarah via the film’s narrative repetition. Through Bendrix and Henry’s stifling of Sarah’s beliefs, Jordan parallels the English assertion of control over the Catholic spirit of Irish nationalism.

Writing about the singularity of Ireland, Fredric Jameson finds in Irish modernism a radicalism in which character and aesthetics create “a space no longer central, as in English life, but marked as marginal and ec-centric after the fashion of the colonized areas of the imperial system. That colonized space may then be expected to transform the modernist formal project radically, while still retaining a distant family likeness to its imperial variants.”⁶⁶ In the adaptation’s revisions to Greene’s modernism, Sarah’s cremation serves as the efforts by two men complicit in the Empire to annihilate the revolutionary potential of her faith, destroying a body steeped in doubleness and with it the radical familiarity to which Jameson refers. Plagued with mutability as a result of her death, Sarah’s legacy now rests completely in control of her male lovers, leaving just the singular lasting images of her they decide to construct, a

⁶¹ Heidi Hartwig, “*The End of the Affair*: A Modernist Conversion Narrative,” *Renascence* 69.3 (Summer 2017), 138.

⁶² Brennan, 97.

⁶³ Bosco, “Catholic Imagination,” 52.

⁶⁴ Pramaggiore, 126.

⁶⁵ Pramaggiore, 13.

⁶⁶ Fredric Jameson, “Modernism and Imperialism,” *Nationalism, Colonialism, and Literature*, ed. Seamus Deane (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1990), 60-61.

decision Jordan accentuates by ending the funeral scene with a long shot of smoke rising from the crematorium. With Sarah's Gothic doubleness extinguished, the crematorium becomes her final resting place in a scene that alludes more to the stark violence of the Holocaust than the resistant Irish mysticism Sarah embodied.

Irish Perspectives on the Global Empire

When Columbia Pictures released *The End of the Affair* in December 1999, Jordan was experiencing a pivotal moment in his career that would define the choices he has made as a filmmaker in the 21st century. Launching one of the most high-profile relationships between a European director and an American film company after Jordan signed a three-picture deal with DreamWorks SKG, his first film for the company, *In Dreams*, opened the previous January to lackluster reviews and an anemic \$11.2 million domestic box-office performance.⁶⁷ Even with Academy-Award nominations for Moore's performance and Pratt's cinematography, *The End of the Affair* also became a failure for the studio, earning \$10.6 million domestically and receiving minor notices from critics and review boards enamored with a wave of unconventional American films produced in Hollywood's mounting Indiewood culture such as Sam Mendes' *American Beauty*, Paul Thomas Anderson's *Magnolia*, and Spike Jonze's

Being John Malkovich.⁶⁸ Jordan found himself at a turning point, electing to direct smaller, more personal projects with increased control.⁶⁹ Jordan's professional decisions in the aftermath of *The End of the Affair* exhibit a sharp rebuke to studio filmmaking and address the neocolonial strains of the globalized world that, as Gillespie indicates, have unique implications for an Irish filmmaker not applicable to the cinemas of other colonized nations: "Globalization ... has made these distinctions even more difficult to enforce as the Irish move toward a more cosmopolitan worldview. ... This trend only increases the obstacles to the formation of a national cinema."⁷⁰ Similarly, in her work on cultural pathologies, psychologist Geraldine Moane has found that the Irish are "culturally more vulnerable to the forces of globalization, and psychologically more vulnerable to exploitation" as a result of the nation's history of colonization.⁷¹ Within this context, Jordan's adaptation of Greene's novel allows the film to operate as a prescient critique of globalized media entities through both its engagement with Greene's own film career and the source text's references to the movies.

Though cinema does not play a prominent role in Greene's novel, the author uses references to film to differentiate the classes of his characters. To initiate his relationship with Sarah, Bendrix invites her to a screening of a film adapted from one of

⁶⁷ Rockett and Rockett, 272.

⁶⁸ Indiewood is a term that, for Michael Z. Newman, encapsulates niche independent films that both resist and are a symptom of corporate Hollywood filmmaking due to their distribution and financing within the Hollywood system and its boutique distribution companies. See Newman's *Indie: An American Film Culture* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011).

⁶⁹ Emer Rockett and Kevin Rockett, *Neil Jordan: Exploring Boundaries* (Dublin: The Liffey Press, 2003), 276-78.

⁷⁰ Gillespie, 239-40.

⁷¹ Geraldine Moane, "Postcolonial Legacies and the Irish Psyche," *Are the Irish Different?*, ed. Tom Inglis (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2014), 126-27.

his novels after she told him earlier at dinner that Henry has an aversion to the cinema. Despite the importance of the movie house to beginning their affair, even Bendrix appears reticent to attend, lamenting the inherent “stock clichés of the screen.”⁷² Through his characters’ disdain for film, Greene reveals a class bias similar to that expressed in his theoretical work on “poetic cinema,” treating the medium as useful to placate and educate the masses not firmly entrenched in the higher echelons of the British class system.

With Greene’s class-conscious posturing on the movies as an entry point, Jordan infuses his portrayal of the movies in the adaptation with a layered critique of both Greene’s film theory and the oppressive force Hollywood cinema exudes in a global economy. When Bendrix and Sarah visit the cinema in the adaptation, they incessantly mock the film meant to be the adaptation of Bendrix’s novel. However, rather than include stock footage or a shoot a film-within-a-film, Jordan has his characters watch Basil Dean’s *21 Days Together* (1940), an adaptation of a John Galsworthy novel with a scenario by Greene.⁷³ Through his characters’ snide comments on a film conceived by Greene himself, Jordan censures the author and his insights into cinema as an art form. Using Greene’s own work against him, Jordan demonstrates the ability of the cinema to create visual cues that break down class barriers by instituting criticisms of those immersed in colonial ideologies. Greene can dismiss cinema as an art of the lower classes. Nevertheless, Jordan consciously, albeit subtly, exposes that Greene earned his esteem in part by

participating in the very medium he often belittled.

At the same time, Jordan’s intentionally global casting in his adaptation of a distinctly British story further deepens his commentary. Even though *The End of the Affair* enjoyed largely positive reviews, it raised the ire of many critics in the United Kingdom. In addition to time-honored gripes about the film’s fidelity to the novel, critics pounced on its alleged lack of period authenticity, anathema for any project making gestures toward the stalwart heritage film genre popularized by postwar adaptations of canonical British texts such as David Lean’s iterations of Dickens.⁷⁴ Likewise, several reviewers took issue with the casting of American Julianne Moore as Sarah and Jordan fixture and fellow Irishman Stephen Rea as Henry, fixating on their overdone accents.⁷⁵ According to Yates, “the UK press responded like angry cuckolds, and put up a more spirited jealous defence of the object, the object being Graham Greene, and in particular, Greene as a signifier of Englishness.”⁷⁶ Although Yates connects the British press’ response to the novel’s and film’s representations of masculine perception, such criticisms also relate to Jordan’s subversive use of the globalization of the film industry to craft a distinctly Irish perspective. In rewriting the nationalistic ideology of the heritage film, Jordan repositions Greene’s decidedly British love triangle as a story of faith and betrayal performed by British, American, and Irish actors in which the character holding the highest position within the colonial project is played by Rea. As a result, Jordan shifts Greene’s

⁷² Greene, 43.

⁷³ Rockett and Rockett, 226.

⁷⁴ Yates, 231.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 231-32.

commentary of the waning days of the British Empire into the globalized world.

Such play with the industrial and artistic contexts of the adaptation further interrogates Englishness and its lingering effects on Ireland in Jordan's depictions of audience interaction with cinema in the film. As she attempts to cope with ending the affair, Sarah slips into a theatre to see a newsreel of Churchill on V-E Day. Though Jordan maintains the camera's focus on Sarah as she comes to realize the war that fostered her affair with Bendrix has come to an end, he also fills the frame with an audience of common people who remain transfixed on the pro-British patriotic images gracing the screen. Through the audience's reaction, Jordan expresses the potential of communications media to control the populace that Hardt and Negri deem so vital to the endurance of their conception of Empire. Distributed to movie houses and disseminated to the population, the newsreel with its one-sided interpretation of war mutes colonial ideology in favor of the unbridled nationalism that would subsequently spawn the civil liberties atrocities of the Cold War and decolonization. By exposing the power of cinema to indoctrinate in a film for Columbia Pictures (an arm of global media conglomerate Sony), Jordan turns the communicative power of the corporation to shape ideology against itself.

In adapting Greene's novel to film, Jordan has integrated an Irish perspective into a work of empire written during the transitory period in history that saw the fall of nation-based imperialism and the rise of global capital. Through the adaptation process, Jordan employs both a work of colonial discourse and financing from a global

media entity to evoke the repressed influence of past and present imperialisms, writing back to the powers that have had significant consequences for Irish identity, both economically and artistically. However, Jordan serves as merely one of the many film artists working today who find themselves in between their national cinema traditions and the opportunity to make commercially viable films for an international market reeling from the remnants of colonial rule and under the thumb of a globalized Empire that all too often champions demographics and marketability over artistic vision.

Jerod Ra'Del Hollyfield is an Associate Professor of Film at Carson-Newman University and the author of *Framing Empire: Postcolonial Adaptations of Victorian Literature in Hollywood*.